Key Words to Summarize

Key Words to Summarize is strategy that helps students learn how to select the content words or phrases that carry the most meaning in a text or article, presentation, video clip, and/or other digital resource. Once the key words have been identified, students use them to write a summary of the content in paragraph form. The strategy provides a streamlined process students can follow and apply to develop the critical skill of summarizing content using a variety of informational resources.

How to implement the strategy:

1. Model the strategy by using an overhead or interactive whiteboard to display a short passage of text. Students should have a copy of the text as well. Read the passage aloud as students read silently.
2. Read through the passage a second time, underlining or high lighting the content words or phrases that carry the most meaning. Think aloud as you select the words and/or phrases you highlight, explaining your reasoning for choosing them.
3. Make a list of the words and/or phrases you highlighted. Think aloud as you craft a summarizing paragraph using the information you pulled from the reading.
4. Have students practice using the process.

The strategy may also be used with other media. You should model using the strategy much the same way as described above. If students are to summarize a presentation or a video clip:

1. Tell them to listen for and list the key words and/or phrases as they watch the presentation or video clip.
2. Students use the list of key words and/or phrases they created to write a summarizing paragraph.